

TAMIL CUSTOMS AND CEREMONIES
CONNECTED WITH
PADDY CULTIVATION IN THE JAFFNA DISTRICT.

By J. P. LEWIS, ESQ., C.C.S.

In a previous Paper I mentioned that peculiar ceremonies were practised, and a conventional language spoken, by the Tamils* of Ceylon, as well as by the Singhalese, during the operations of paddy cultivation.

I have since collected information on this subject in the Jaffna Peninsula from different sources, and I have hence† been able to compile an account of these ceremonies, which it may be interesting to compare with the descriptions of the ceremonies practised by the Kandyans and Low-country Singhalese already recorded by Messrs. Ievers and Bell.

It is a rule among the Tamils, as among the Singhalese, that after the New Year's Day, which is the first day of the month *Chittirai*, and falls on the 11th or 12th of April, no work of any kind should be begun, except at a "lucky hour."

* A list of Tamil threshing-floor words is annexed to the Paper above referred to.

† I may state that I do not pretend to have myself been an eyewitness of all the ceremonies hereinafter detailed. This would have been practically impossible. The cultivators are very chary of performing them in the presence of a stranger, more especially of a European. I may add, that it is not easy to get an intelligent account of them from the natives, and those who are capable of giving such an account affect to consider them too trivial and ridiculous to describe. It must not be supposed that all the ceremonies described in this Paper are performed on every occasion of paddy cultivation in the Jaffna District. This is the case only in the more remote Districts, such as Poonaryn (Púmakari) and Karachchi; in others many details are omitted, or the ceremonies, with the exception of the choosing of a lucky hour, are neglected altogether, as in the neighbourhood of Jaffna.

This can be ascertained either from the village astrologer (*cháttiri*) or by consulting one of the Tamil almanacs.*

Paddy cultivation forms no exception to this rule. It is of the utmost importance that every operation connected with it should be commenced on an auspicious day, for it is believed that the good or ill-fortune of the undertaking is decided by the influence of the asterism that governs the day upon which the work is begun. For instance, with respect to sowing and reaping, the rule is, செவ்வாயில் வித்தும் புகனில் அருவியும் ஆகாது (*chevváyil vittum Putanil aruviyum ákátu*) "sowing should not be done on Tuesday, nor reaping on Wednesday"; while, as regards threshing, it is believed that if the day be dominated by a malevolent star, the crop is liable to be pilfered by the *kúlis* (mischievous sprites, who correspond to the Singhalese *yaksayó*). This is set forth with due precision in the following stanza :—

இரவியில் பத்தில் ஒன்றும்
இந்துபன்றென்றில் ஒன்றும்
வருபுதன் மூன்றில் ஒன்றும்
மண்மகற் கெட்டில் ஒன்றும்
இருபதில் ஒன்றுங் காரிக்கியல்புடைக் கூளிகொள்ளும்
குருபுகர் இரண்டு நன்றாம் கொழுஞ்சூடு மிதிப்பதற்கே.

Iraviyil pattil onrum

Intupannosiril onrum

Varuputan múnriil onrum

Maṇmakat keddil onrum

Irupatil onruங் hárik kiyal puðaik kúli kollum

Kuru Pukar iran்து nannáram koluந் chúdu mitippataṭhé.

[“On Sunday the *kúlis* will carry away one-tenth; on Monday, one-eleventh; on the following Wednesday, one-third; on Tuesday, one-eighth; on Saturday, one-twentieth; Thursday and Friday, these two are good for a bountiful threshing.”]

In addition to these precautions it is necessary, before the commencement of any undertaking, that the assistance of

* There are at least three of these in use in Jaffna,—one published there, and the others at Colombo and Madras. See Note 1, at end.

the god *Pillaiyár** should be invoked and a *ponkal*† performed in his honour. It is usual, at the same time, to pay similar honours to any deity to whom the nearest temple or grove is dedicated.‡

The operation which falls earliest in the work of cultivation is manuring. At the lucky hour the first basket of manure is carried to the field, and a small portion of the field selected at hap-hazard is manured and dug with a mamoty.

* "The Son." This is the common designation in the Northern Province of the god *Kanésar*, or *Kanapati*. He is also called by the cultivators *Periyapiran* or *Periyaraṇ* "the Great One". He is a son of Siva and Durga (*Párvati*), and is the god of wisdom and remover of obstacles.

"He is lord of the troops of the mischievous and malignant imps, who are supposed to cause obstacles and difficulties, and is therefore invoked at the commencement of all undertakings. His bloated, dwarfish, and distorted appearance, which is like that of the *gayas* of Siva, over whom he presides, indicates sensuality and love of good living, while his elephant's head is said to typify a combination of wisdom, or rather of cunning and sagacity."—*Hinduism*, by Professor Monier Williams, p. 165 (Sinhalese *Gana*, *Ganesa*, *Ganapati*).

"In the North-Central Province the villagers worship a god called Pular, who, according to them, heals their diseases and affords them help in various ways. They say they trust Pular to obtain help in this world, and Buddha for happiness in the next world." Report by Rev. J. Ireland Jones, quoted in *Ceylon Observer*.

"And on the middle porch god Ganesha—

With disk and hook—to bring wisdom and wealth,
Propitious sate, wreathing his sidelong trunk."

— *Light of Asia*.

† Rice is boiled in milk in a new earthen pot, or in a brass pot cleaned for the occasion. Plantains, curds, and ghee are offered with the rice—also jakfruit, mangoes, lemons, &c. Camphor is then burned, and homage paid to the god.

‡ "Indra" (*Intiran*) is lord of the clouds, rains, seasons, crops, &c., and he is worshipped at the season of sowing and reaping; but the chief honours appear to be paid to *Pillaiyár*. *Indra* (Sanskrit) = "the rainer", "the irrigator"; *Indu* = "drops of rain."

Winslow has *கலப்பைப்பச்சக்கரம்* [*halappaichchakkaram*]: "A diagram in astrology in the form of a plough to determine on the best day for beginning the ploughing of the season." I have not, however, heard of an instance in Jaffna of the adoption of this method of discovering the lucky hour for ploughing.

This forms the inauguration of the work of cultivation.

As in the Jaffna District ploughing is carried on between April and September, whenever a fall of rain affords an opportunity for it, it is necessary early in the (Tamil) year to be prepared for this operation. Accordingly, the ceremony of yoking the oxen is performed during the first half of the month *Chittirai* (April—May). At one of the hours fixed for this purpose, a pair of very tame oxen, often decorated with garlands of flowers, red ochre, saffron powder, &c., is taken to the field with a yoke and a plough, and after the land-owner has paid the usual homage to *Pillaiyár*, by splitting a cocoanut in the field,* he yokes the bulls together, making them face towards the north or east.† He and his

* According to one of my informants this should be done in the north-western corner. In the *Devigané-dáné* ceremony of the Sighalese, the *Madupuraya* breaks a cocoanut (see C. A. S. Journal, 1883, p. 59), and it is remarkable that this is called *Gana-devigan-gahanavé*. *Gana-deviyó* = *Pillaiyár* (see note* *anté*), so that this act of the *Madupuraya*'s has the same object as has that of the Tamil cultivator, viz., to sacrifice to *Pillaiyár*. Probably some of the Hindú ceremonies have been retained by the Sighalese after their original significance and intention have become obscured or forgotten. There can be no doubt that the practice of these ceremonies by the Sighalese is of ancient origin, and is not an importation from their Tamil neighbours. In fact, the ceremonies are more complicated, and have suffered less detrition among the Sighalese than among the Tamils. This is one reason why I think it a mistake to attribute the addiction of the Sighalese all over the Island to fragments of the Hindú cult, mainly to the fact that the later Kandyan kings were Tamils and Hindús, or to the discovery by the Sighalese people (Kandyans) after a trial of Buddhism that as a religion it was inadequate for their wants. The Sighalese were Hindús before they were Buddhists, and though they adopted Buddhism (circa 246 B.C.), the mass of the people never entirely gave up Hindúism, and retained many of the beliefs and practices connected with it. Buddhism was grafted on to Hindúism.

† "Amongst the four cardinal points, the north and east were always preferred, and of these the east. The south was highly objectionable, as the realms of the Indian Pluto, Yama, were situate there. The north was liked, because the abode of Siva was in that direction. Sunrise and sunset must have operated in deciding the merits of the east and west."—*Arichandra*, by Sir M. Coomara Swamy, note on p. 241.

men then plough three elliptical furrows, either to show how the work is to be done, or perhaps in order to test the implements. All those who are present then congratulate the field-owner, and they signify their approval of the work, and their participation in it, by touching the plough-handle.*

This preliminary ceremony having been performed, the cultivators are ready to plough at any time when there is a fall of rain. So scrupulous are some of them, that when, as sometimes happens, rain falls early in the (Tamil) year, and before the yoking ceremony has been performed, they would rather forego the chance of ploughing altogether, than commence it without having observed the proper preliminaries.

It is considered an advantage if the oxen used in ploughing are *máman* and *marumakan*—i. e., “uncle” and “nephew”—and if, as is usually the case, there are two ploughs at work in one field,† the men in charge of them should also be uncle and nephew.

It may interest the present Director of Public Instruction to learn that in constructing the plough the following rules as to materials should be observed, if possible:—

பாலை படவாள்
பங்கிராம் மேழி
ஊரை கொழுக்கிராம்
கருங்காவி ஏர்க்கால்
புன்னைப்புது நுகம்
புதுப்புடு ஆத்தி நார்
பன்னை கிட்டித்தடி.

Pálai padavál
Paṅkiráy méli
Kárai Koluchchiráy
Karunjkáli érkhál
Punñaiip putu nukam
Putup púḍḍu átti nár
Pannai Kiddittadi.

* See C. A. S. Journal, 1883, p. 55, note on “the practice of touching objects to baffle the evil chance.”

† The fact that two ploughs are generally used at the same time in a field (sometimes there are as many as five or six), both going over the same ground, is an answer to the objection sometimes made to the introduction of ploughs of a better pattern, viz., that they require more men to work them than do the native ploughs. It is true that a Jaffna plough only requires one man to work it, but then there is usually another plough following it; and though this second plough does not make the same furrow as the first, it does work that would have been done by the first plough were the latter of an improved pattern.

which the accompanying sketch (No. 1) of a Jaffna plough* will help to explain.

The plough is made of four distinct pieces of wood. In one of these the *padavál*, a diminutive iron share (*holu*), is inserted, and it is fixed in its place by a small piece of wood called the *koluchchiráy*. The other two are the handle (*méli*) and the pole (*érkhál*). According to the rules, then, these pieces should all be of different kinds of wood, the *padavál* of *pálai* (Ceylon ironwood), the handle of *paṅkiráy* (a tree of which I do not know the English or scientific name), the *koluchchiráy* of *kárai* (a kind of thorny shrub, *Webera tetrandra*), the pole of ebony, the yoke of Alexandrian laurel,† and its pegs of *pannai*,‡ while the ropes (*púḍḍán kayíru*) for attaching the oxen to it should be made of fibre from the *átti* tree.§

It seems, however, that the ostensible reason for using these woods is not their peculiar suitability for the purpose, but to ensure that in the ensuing season there may be neither too much nor too little rain for the paddy.

The cord that attaches the pole to the yoke is called the *nantai*.||

A field is usually ploughed three times, at intervals of two or three days.¶ There is no mud-levelling in the

* Plate No. 1 (see note 2). The shaft is not quite long enough in the sketch.

† Singhalese, *domba*; *Calophyllum inophyllum*, L.

‡ Singhalese, *val-ēhela*?

§ “*Bauhinia racemosa*, L. There are two species, viz., (1) காட்டாத்தி (*káddáti*), the rind of which is used for withes, *Bauhinia parviflora*, L.; (2) திருவாத்தி (*tiruvátti*), a flower-tree sacred to Siva, also medicinal, *Bauhinia tomentosa*, L.”—Wins. Probably the first species is meant.

|| There is a proverb, தட்டுமலிலே தந்தைதெறித்தத்தோல் (*nađu ulavilé nantai terittatupóla*), “Like the snapping of the yoke-tie, when the plough has done half its work.” Percival, 4,050.

¶ Viz., நிலவெடுப்பு (*nilaveduppu*), breaking ground; உழைரடுப்பு (*ulavi-raddippu*) or மாறி (*marai*), second ploughing; and முன்றும் உழுவு (*múñrám ulavu*), third ploughing.

Jaffna District, except occasionally in Púnakari and Karachchi. The cultivation generally depends entirely upon rain,* and in consequence there is usually only one cultivation of paddy in the year.†

Sowing takes place in August—September. There is no fall of rain at this season: the fields are sown dry (*pulutitaittaippu*), and the seed then remains in the ground without germinating until the preliminary rains of the North-East monsoon begin to fall.

On the auspicious day, which, according to the rules above-quoted, can never be a Tuesday, the land-owner or his son prepares a small quantity of raw rice from the paddy which he had stored up for seed, and sends it to the village temple to be boiled and offered to the deity to whom the temple is dedicated. Milk, young cocoanuts, betel, camphor, and benzoin, and all the other accompaniments of a *ponkal* are sent with the rice.

At the lucky hour a handful of seed-paddy and a mamoty are taken to the field, and after splitting a cocoanut to Pillaiyár, facing towards the north,‡ the land-owner sows the seed, and hoes it in with the mamoty; and in this operation he is assisted by his servants. The sowing is thus inaugurated.

Reaping takes place in the month *Tai* (January—Feb-

* Fields of which the cultivation depends entirely upon rain are called மானவாரி (*máñavári* fields). *Máñavári* is a corruption of *váñávári* = “sky-water.”

† There are three cultivations in the year, viz., (1) காலபோகம் (*kálapókam*) = “the regular crop,” which is chiefly of paddy sown in August—September, and harvested in February—March. *Varaku*, *chámi*, and other dry grains are also cultivated. (2) சிறபோகம் (*chirupókam*) = “the little crop,” of peas (*payaru*), &c., and near tanks quick-ripening paddy, sown in February—March, and over within two months. (3) இடைப்போகம் (*idaippókam*) = “middle crop,” of chillies, onions, &c.; and in Temmírádchi and Pachchilaiappalli, (if there is enough water in the tanks,) of paddy, which is sown at the end of April and reaped in June.

‡ *Vide ante*, p. 307, note.*

ruary). It must not be done on a Wednesday. At the lucky hour the land-owner makes a rough extempore image of Ganésa out of a handful of moist cow-dung, decorates it with the tops of *aruku* grass,* which is sacred to this and other gods, and after doing *púsaito* it, leaves his house, taking care to pass by a lighted lamp and a full water-pot—the latter placed on a heap of paddy in front of his house. The mouth of this pot is filled up by a cocoanut surrounded by five or more (but always some odd number of) mango leaves.† On his way to the field, if he has to pass a temple he does not omit to make his devotions there. On reaching his field he splits a cocoanut, and reaps a few of the ears of paddy, and takes them home with him, passing by the lamp and water-pot as before. In the inner room of his house he hangs up a few of the ears, and treads out the paddy from those remaining.

The paddy he places in a small old basket, which he hands to his wife. She receives it with both hands, and, facing north,‡ either keeps the paddy or boils it at once as “new rice.”§

This “new rice” is eaten at the lucky hour, and a little raw rice, with the usual accompaniments, is sent to the village temple to be boiled and offered as a *ponkal* to the deity. The reaping is then proceeded with.

But it is the “threshing” that the cultivators have to be the most punctilious about. It is commenced on one of the auspicious days—Thursday or Friday (or sometimes on Sunday), but never on a Wednesday—and continued on

* *Cynodon dactylon*, Pers. See C. A. S. Journal, 1880, pp. 7-8, for a full account of this grass, by Mr. W. Ferguson.

† The cocoanut-oil lamp also has five or seven or some odd number of wick-spouts.

‡ So the Singhalese set apart on a post three handfuls of ripe ears for *Kataragama Deviyo* (the Kandasuvámi of the Tamils; Skanda, the god of War). (C. A. S. Journal, 1883, p. 48.)

§ This appears to correspond to the “New Rice-feast” (*Alut-batkéma*) of the Singhalese, except that the latter takes place after the threshing is concluded. (Journal, 1880, p. 50; 1883, p. 56.)

successive nights. A threshing-floor (*kaṭam*) is prepared—levelling and smoothing a portion of the field in a circular shape.

The boundary line of this circle is strewn with pieces of bark or leaves of margosa* and bits of the *pirandai* creeper†. This is in order to form a “guard-cord” (*hávathkodi*)‡ against the *kúlis*. An extempore image of Ganésa is made of cow-dung, as usual, by one of the servants, hence called the *Pillaiyárpólán*, and decorated with *aru* grass. *Púsai* is then performed to it—i. e., camphor and benzoin incense are burned before it, and offerings made of

* There is a saying පෙය්චු ගෙව්ප්පුවපොල (péychchu réppilai pólé) “as margosa leaves before a demon.” (Percival, 4,955.) The Kandyans use margosa with the same object. (See C. A. S. Journal, 1880, p. 49.) In the low-country the ricks are frequently encircled with young cocoanut leaves or jungle creepers (C. A. S. Journal, 1883, p. 48), no doubt as a “guard-cord.”

† There must be some peculiar potency also in the *pirandai* creeper. See Mr. Fowler's account of the Panikkan's use of it as a sort of charm. (*Ibid.* pp. 15—16.) It is the *híressa* of the Sighalese (*Ibid.* 1880, p. 49; 1883, p. 49.) Moormen have the same opinion of its efficacy as a charm. “A species of sun-flower (*helicophilum*)”—Clough. *Pirandai* is not given by Winslow.

‡ I did not find that in the Jaffna Peninsula circles were drawn on the threshing-floor of ashes, as among the Sighalese, but I dare say there is such a practice among the Tamils also. I see Winslow gives as a meaning of காவல்சுப்பு, (*hávalseyya*) “to make (with a straw-rope) diagrams on the ground, &c., to defend the grain from demons.” With respect to the number of circles drawn, the Kandyans whom I have questioned on the point said that there should be three concentric circles. This agrees with what Mr. Bell found in the low-country. In Kégalla the number is seven. In addition to Knox, Davy, and Brodie, Sirr also gives a short description of Sighalese threshing-floor ceremonies, and he, too, states that three circles are described, one within the other, at the mystic rite when the paddy is trodden out. (*Ceylon and the Cingalese*, Vol. I., p. 151.)

Among the Sighalese the substitute for the image of *Pillaiyár* seems to be the *muttá* (see C. A. S. Journal, 1883, p. 49), “the great grandfather,” which may be either a round stone (*ibid.* 1880, p. 49) or an unhusked cocoanut (*arakpol*). *Mutta* in Mr. Bell's Paper should be *muttá*.

plantain fruit, betel, &c., the worshipper doing obeisance by crossing the forearms in front of his face, and striking his temple three times with closed fist.

A stake (*polikkadai*)—which, if it is to be a protection against the *kúlis*, should be of the wood of the *strychnos* tree (*káñchúrai*),* but is generally of some hard wood, such as *vidattal* or *tiruk-konḍal*,†—is next fixed by the chief farm-servant (who is hence called the *Kaddaippólán*) in the centre of the circle, with a few ears of paddy and a few margosa leaves tied at the top of it. If the floor is of loose soil, mats are spread round the stake; if not the bare ground is used as a threshing-floor. Water, in which fresh macerated cow-dung has been soaked, is sprinkled over the floor to purify it. The usual cocoanut is split, and then the *Kaddaippólán* (usually an elderly man) takes some ears from the rick, and holding them over his head with the goad (*polimiláru*) or the flail (*vérai-ál*) walks three times round the stake.‡ He places the ears at the foot of the stake, standing with his face towards the north or east. He is followed by all the other servants (*pólamárkal*), each carrying sheaves of ears, and depositing them round the stake, until there is a sufficient quantity for threshing to commence. The men then pull down the heap (*pórppai*) and spread out the sheaves conveniently for threshing.

* *Strychnos nux-vomica*; Sighalese, *goda-kaduru*.

† *Cassia fistula*, L; Sighalese, *ehela*.

‡ This resembles the procedure in the Rayigam Kóralé. The Sighalese dispense with the stake, the place of which is taken by the *muttá*. Instead of the chief servant it is “any *goyiyá* reputed fortunate.” He walks three times round the *muttá*, and places the sheaf on it. Instead of facing towards the north or east, he looks “in the direction fixed by the astrologer with reference to the *néhata*.” But in the ceremony immediately following, the chief *goyiyá* (the *haddaippólán*) carries the *deti goiyá* (*vérai-ál*) round the corn. The Jaffna ceremony, in fact, seems to be an abridgment of that followed in Rayigam Kóralé. In the Siyané Kóralé the cultivator walks seven times round the *arakvala*—the hole in the centre of the circle in which the charms are placed. (See C. A. S. Journal, 1883, pp. 49, 51.)

While engaged in these operations they keep up shouting the auspicious word "poli," "poli," for good luck. *

Three pairs of buffaloes or bullocks having been linked together in a row (*nadaiyan kodi*) are led into the heap of paddy, and the biggest of the six is tied to the stake. This animal is called *pórppainadaiyan*, and those further from it *vaddinadaiyar*. The last is called the *cháduváyan*. A man (*pórppaippólan*) then drives them round and round the stake, abreast of each other, with repeated applications of a thick stick (*polimiláru*) to their hides and shouts of "poli, poli,"* until the grain is all trodden out from the ears. Not until then are the oxen released or allowed even to be taken to water; neither will the *Kaddaippólan* leave the threshing-floor until all the ricks of paddy have been threshed, and his food is supplied to him there. When the oxen are taken out from the floor for the last time each day, one of the servants takes a wisp of straw, and pulls the tail of the one nearest the stake, and then puts the straw on the floor.

The completed heap of threshed paddy is greeted with shouts of "poli," and the straw is collected and tossed by means of a bent stick (*vélai-ál* or *vélai-káran*)† to leeward of the threshing-floor. When nearly all the straw has been so collected into a heap, the oxen are taken off the threshing-floor. Four of the men then starting, each from one of the cardinal points of the floor, and facing the stake, in a sitting posture heap up the paddy with their hands. In this operation they move round towards the right, following each other in a circle, and when they come back each to his place in rotation, they stop, and the rest of the ceremony is performed by the *Kaddaippólan*, who walks round the heap to the right three times in a stooping posture between them and the heap of grain, and smoothes and levels the top

* The Coorg ryots shout "polé! polé! Devaré." (C. A. S. Journal, 1883, p. 81.) In the Kalutara District, on the other hand, it seems that the bullock-drivers are not allowed to shout to their animals. (*Ibid.*, p. 51.)

† That is, the labourer. Curiously enough the name given to this stick by the Singhalese cultivators is *deti-goyiyá* (*goyiyá* = "cultivator").

and sides. Holding his right arm with his left hand* he marks on the top and sides of the heap with his finger representations of the trident (*chúlam*) of Siva, at the four cardinal points, and also certain diagrams, generally circles, ornamented with tridents.† A cow-dung representation of Pillaiyár is again made, and, adorned with *aruku* grass, is placed on the heap with split cocoanuts and the knife used in splitting them. Rice is then boiled and offered to Pillaiyár. A twisted straw rope is put round the heap as a guard-cord (*kárazhodi*) until the winnowing takes place. The men having thus taken measures to protect *kávatcheyya* (the heap) against the *kúlis*, are at liberty to leave the threshing-floor for a time. In case another heap of paddy has to be threshed the same night, the paddy already threshed is heaped in the east corner of the floor to await winnowing after the other rick has been threshed.

Some of the prevalent superstitions with respect to these *kúlis* may be noticed here. The *kúlis* are supposed to be mischievous, and to favour, or disfavour, the farmer according as they are propitiated by him or not. They will remove paddy from a neighbouring floor to the one favoured by them, from high to lowland, from east to west, and to

* In a Kandyan picture of a *Saluvadana Nilamé* (Master of the Robes) he is handing the Crown in this manner to the king. It is meant to show reverence or respect.

† Tridents are always introduced into the figures drawn by the Singhalese cultivators, both Kandyan and Low-country, but it does not appear that they understand what it signifies. (C. A. S. Journal, 1883, p. 55.) Neither did Sirr understand what they intended to represent. He says the circles are quartered by a cross, the four points of which are terminated by a "character resembling a written letter M." (*Ceylon and the Cingalese*, Vol. 1, p. 151.) Certainly there is this resemblance in the florid tridents in the diagrams given by Davy, and in the Pasdun Kóralé diagram. (C. A. S. Journal, 1883, p. 79.)

In a Buddhist religious picture in my possession all the gods attendant upon Buddha, except Siva, are represented holding a *trisúla* in one hand and a sword (*kañuva*) in the other. The trident is a common emblem at Jaffna.

leeward, but not to windward.* Accordingly, a man will not thresh on the same day as his neighbour, if the latter's threshing-floor is to the south-west of his.† He is angry if his neighbour, with a threshing-floor thus favourably situated with respect to his, begins to thresh his paddy at the same time as he does. The neighbour, on the other hand, congratulates himself on the prospective assistance of the *kúlis*, who will pilfer the paddy from the other man, and bring it to his threshing-floor; and seizes the opportunity to propitiate them, and so begin his threshing under the most favourable conditions.

If a high festival is going on in the village temple, no threshing is allowed to be carried on on that day in the village.

No empty vessel or basket can be carried past the threshing-floor while the threshing is going on, and there are instances of wayfarers being detained at the floor, if they happen to pass it at such a time. The upsetting of a basket or vessel, or the overturning of a hut (*kudil*)‡ or anything that happens inadvertently, is considered an unlucky omen. Every turn taken by the men engaged in any of these ceremonies should be to the right, not to the left,§ and even the oxen are made to conform to this

* This is shrewd of the *kúlis*,—they do not like to have the wind against them.

† At the time of harvest in the Jaffna District (February—March) the North-East monsoon is blowing, hence the South-West would be the leeward.

‡ A hut is like an exaggerated umbrella made of palmyra leaves, used for sheltering cattle, stacks, &c.

§ In "A Lady's Cruise in a French Man-of-War," Miss Gordon-Cumming, describing the consecration of a Roman Catholic church in Samoa, says: "I grieve to have to record that, in leading the procession round the foundations of the new church, he (the Bishop) made the turn *widdershins*. I believe that this is contrary to ecclesiastical custom, and, of course, to my Scottish mind it suggested grievous misfortunes in store." — Vol. I., p. 120. To the word *widdershins* the authoress appends the following note: "Or more correctly, in old Celtic parlance, *tuaphol*—that is to say, a turn contrary to the course of the sun, keeping the left hand towards the centre. It was only used when invoking a curse, as opposed to the turn *desul*, which invoked a blessing on the object round which the turn was made. The superstition is common to all lands in whose early mythology sun-worship held a place." (See "From the Hebrides to the Himalayas," Vol. I., p. 203.)

rule. But it will help to thwart the *kúlis* if the oxen are made to take one or two turns to the left, instead of to the right, when commencing operations.

It is unlucky for men or animals to pass out from the threshing-floor, except at the proper entrance (*kalavásal*) on the east side.

Next comes the winnowing. The winnows to be used are marked with tridents in cow-dung. After the usual *ponkal* to *Pillaiyár*, one or two mats are spread on that side of the threshing-floor which is exposed to the wind (which at this time comes from the North-East), and paddy is poured from the winnows along the windward edge of the mats, so that the chaff flies off to the leeward, leaving the grain in a heap. It is an unlucky omen if one of the winnows upsets, or is blown off by the wind; and if in the act of sifting the winnow strikes against the heap, a trident is at once marked on the place in the heap where the latter was touched by the winnow.

The paddy is formed into an oblong heap of uniform width, and the surface is made as smooth as possible. A line is traced with a corner of the winnow along the ridge of the heap, and tridents are similarly marked at each end of the heap, and in the middle,* thus:—



The cow-dung (*Pillaiyár*) is then placed on the paddy-heap, and the twisted straw rope is put round the heap as before.† These precautions are necessary until the paddy is measured, as it is supposed, after the measuring, to be secure from the *kúlis*.

Before the paddy is measured, a winnow is plunged into the heap, and filled up well with paddy, which is kept apart to be given to the temple as a thank-offering. This paddy

* A similar practice is followed by some of the Galle cultivators. (C. A. S. Journal, 1883, p. 55.)

† The Kandyans put a twisted straw rope round the paddy after the winnowing. (Ibid, 1880, p. 49.)

is called *mísupali*.* The measuring of the heap is then proceeded with, and the land-owner gives the cultivators or servants their proper shares, and his tithe to the renter. Sometimes the blacksmith, carpenter, barber, dhoby, and tom-tom beater—the *kudimakkal*† employed by the land-owner—are called, and their dues paid to them in kind; and paddy is also dealt out to beggars.‡ After this, at a lucky hour, he has the rest of the paddy removed to his house, and stored in the loft in large ola baskets, which are closed at the tops by being stitched with palmyra olas. The paddy required for seed is kept exposed to the sun for three successive days, and then placed in a corner of the house to cool. On an auspicious day it is stored in ola baskets.

The harvest having thus been concluded, the farmer performs a *ponkal* at a neighbouring temple in honour of Pillaiyár, Indra, and other deities, and lastly in honour of his *kániyálar*, the ancestors from whom he inherited his lands.

When any of these ceremonies are performed, everything must be done strictly according to ancient precedent; and, as I have said before, any accident, however trivial, is looked upon as a bad omen, and therefore every precaution is taken to prevent the occurrence of one. After any ceremony has been performed, the chief actor in it takes care not to give anything away from his house the same day, such as paddy,

* Literally, "grain abundance," a euphemistic word. See my Paper on the Language of the Threshing-floor. It is the *akyála* or *Deviyanné-ví* of the Singhalese which is offered to the gods, and more especially to the goddess Pattini and to Kataragama Deviyó. (C. A. S. Journal, 1880, p. 50; 1883, p. 58.) It seems also that some of this new rice goes to Buddha, or rather to the *viháré*. (*Id.*, 1880, p. 50; 1883, p. 56.)

† There is an accurate account of the eighteen *Kudimakkal* by the late Jaffna Kachchéri Mudaliyár, printed with the Administration Report of the Government Agent of the Northern Province for 1883, p. 144 A.

‡ The Kandyans observe the same custom. (See Journal, 1880, p. 50, and Journal, 1883, p. 55, extract from Knox.)

oil, salt, or money; but there is no objection to his receiving such articles.*

There are many superstitions connected with agriculture, generally among the more primitive Tamil peasantry. For instance, certain days fixed by astrologers or the almanacs are called "worm days" (*puluná!*), and anything sown on such days is supposed to be liable to be eaten by worms. On some days the sap is supposed to run up, and therefore on them fruit trees may be planted, while on other days it is supposed to run down, and such days are suitable for the planting of bulbs.†

Various charms‡ are used to prevent the attacks of flies, worms, crabs, and other pests. Olas, sprinkled with saffron-water, and previously charmed by the repetition over them of *mantírams* for hours together, are tied to the plants for this purpose. Sometimes with the same object the cultivator makes a vow of a new earthen pot with which to celebrate a *ponkal* after the reaping of the crops.

There is still a widely-prevailing belief in the evil-eye (*kannúru*) and the evil-tongue (*nárvúru*).§ The visitor who

* Superstition and self-interest are here in most convenient agreement.

† Cf. the American song quoted by Mr. Bell:—

"If ye plant yer corn on the growin' moon,
And put up the lines for crows,
You'll find it will bear, and yer wheat will, too,
If it's decent land where't grows.

"But potatoes now are a different thing,
They want to grow down, that is plain;
And don't ye see you must plant for that
When the moon is on the wane."

(C. A. S. Journal, 1883, p. 68.)

‡ See Note (3).

§ Hence the proverb கல் ஏறிக்குத் தட்டினாலும் கண் ஏறிக்குத் தட்பக் கூடாது (*hal erikkut tappinálum kai erikkut tappak kúdátu*) "Though one may escape the cast of a stone, he cannot escape the glance of an evil-eye." (Perc., 2216.) "The evil-eye (*கண் ஓன்று*) and the evil-tongue (*பாஷ்டு*) are feared very generally. To avert their influence as regards fruits, &c., in a garden, it is common to put up some object of attraction, as a water-pot whitewashed, inverted on a stump, and dotted with black spots, &c. In some enclosures grotesque images are seen." (*Ibid.*) These pots may be seen also in Singhalese gardens.

travels along the roads about Jaffna will not fail to notice among the tobacco, brinjal, and other crops frequent and more or less elaborate "scare-crows" (*veruṭi*) of various grotesque shapes. These are not intended to frighten birds, but to be a protection against the evil-eye.* It is hoped that they will divert the attention of the passer-by, and prevent his making a too close scrutiny of the crop itself—a scrutiny which might have a baneful effect upon it.†

The use of a conventional language by the cultivators I need not here enlarge upon.

NOTES.

(1).—ASTROLOGY IN AGRICULTURE.

From the "Pañchāṅkam‡ for the Táraṇa year 1806 of the Sálivákya (1884-5) calculated by Irakunátiyar son of Santískaraiyar, of Nallúr, near Jaffna, and printed at the Private Press at Vannainakar (Vannárpāṇṇai) Jaffna," I extract the following:—

Several "lucky hours"—generally on different days of the

* They serve, however, also to keep away monkeys.

† The late Government Agent of the Northern Province, Mr. Dyke, on one occasion, in 1867, encamped at Káratívu among the paddy fields, and rode round and inspected the paddy just ready to be reaped. The crop that harvest was a very good one, giving a rent to Government of over 3,000 rix-dollars, but next year the rent fell to a little over 600 rix-dollars. The people attributed the failure of the crop to Mr. Dyke's inspection of the fields. This was carrying the evil-eye theory rather far, for it was not the crop that was inspected that failed, but the succeeding one. I suppose the former was too far advanced to be affected.

‡ The Indian Almanac derives its name Pañcháṅkam (*pañcha* five, *āṅka*, divisions) from its giving the time of commencement and duration of five important things—1st *váram*, the Saturday; 2nd *títi*, lunar day; 3rd *nakshatram*, the constellation for the day; 4th *yókam*; 5th *karaṇam*. For the performance of the many ceremonies which his religion enjoins, it is necessary for a Hindú to examine one and all of these five essentials, to determine whether the time is propitious or not." (Paper by Captain Mackenzie on the "Pañcháṅkam" in *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. III., p. 137.)

month—are given for each month, during which a particular agricultural operation is carried on, thus:—

1.—*The ploughing festival (Ermāṇkalam)* may be begun (1), on Thursday, the 7th day of the month *Chittirai** at $15\frac{3}{4}$ nálikais† after dark when the stars Suváti and Velli‡ are at the zenith in the sign *Makaram*; (2) on Thursday, the 21st of the same month at 7 o'clock in the morning, when the human shadow is ten feet long, in *Mitúṇam*; (3) the same day, 13 nálikais after dark, when the moon is setting, in *Makaram*.

2.—*Preparation of the Field.*—There are seventeen occasions—viz., four in April,|| three in May, four in June, three in July, and four in August, on which the fields may be manured and ridges made, &c. The days are Mondays and Thursdays, except that there is one Wednesday in May and three in June, and one Friday in August. The favourable hour is, at night six times, in the forenoon five times, twice in the afternoon, twice at sunset, once at noon, and once at dawn.

* That is, April 11th to May 11th (31 days in the Tamil month).

† Nálikai = Singhalese *peya* = 24 minutes.

‡ Venus.

§ The Tamil names of the signs of the zodiac are—

1 Méḍam	= Aries	7 Tulám	= Libra
2 Idāpam	= Taurus	8 Viruchchikam	= Scorpio
3 Mitúṇam	= Gemini	9 Taṇusu	= Sagittarius
4 Karkkáḍakam	= Cancer	10 Makaram	= Capricornus
5 Chiṇkam	= Leo	11 Kumpam	= Aquarius
6 Kanni	= Virgo	12 Míṇam	= Pisces

|| Though I use the English names of the months, it must be understood that the months intended begin on the 11th or 12th of the English month, or thereabouts; thus, in 1884-85,

April	means April 11th to May 11th.
May	do. May 12th to June 12th.
June	do. June 13th to July 14th.
July	do. July 14th to August 14th.
August	do. August 15th to September 14th.
September	do. September 15th to October 14th.
October	do. October 15th to November 13th.
November	do. November 14th to December 13th.
December	do. December 14th to January 11th.
January	do. January 12th to February 10th.
February	do. February 11th to March 11th.
March	do. March 11th to April 11th.

3.—*Sowing*.—Two days in June, four in July, four in August, three in September, four in October, and three in November,—in all twenty times. The favourite days are Wednesday and Friday, then Thursday and Sunday; Monday is chosen once, Tuesday and Saturday never.

4.—*Reaping*.—Twelve days in January, seven in February, and four in March. Every day except Tuesday and Sunday.* Time,—generally at sunset or night.

5.—*Heaping up the Grain for Threshing*.—January, February, and March in the asterisms† Kártikai, Tiruvátirai, A'yiliyam, Uttiram, Suváti, Kéddai, Uttirádám, Chatayam, Révati, and the *ilakkıṇams* Mituṇam, Karkkádakam, Chinkam, Viruchchikam, and Kumpam.

6.—*Threshing*.—Thursday and Friday are the proper days, on account of the saying, “if you thresh on Sunday, the kúlis will carry away one-tenth, on Monday one-eleventh, on Tuesday one-eighth, on Saturday, one-twentieth.”

7.—*Bringing home the grain*.—Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday, the asterisms Parani, Urókini, Tiruvátirai, Makam,

* “Sunday, Tuesday, and Saturday are, as a rule, considered unlucky days, Sunday being not quite so bad as the other two.” (*Ind. Ant.*, Vol. III., p. 138.)

† *Nakshattiram* = Sighalese *nekata*.—These are twenty-seven in number, and are the constellations through which the moon in her monthly course passes. Great importance is attached to them in astrological calculations. They are divided into male, female, and neuter; good, bad, and indifferent; those which look upwards, those which look downwards, and those which look straightforward. Each *nakshattiram* is divided into four parts, called *poda*, and two and a-half *nakshattiram*s equal a *rási*, or sign of the zodiac.” (*Ibid.*, p. 138.)

The Tamil names of the asterisms are:—

1 Achechuvini	10 Makam	19 Múlam
2 Parani	11 Púram	20 Púrádám
3 Kártikai	12 Uttiram	21 Uttirádám
4 Urókini	13 Attam	22 Tiruvónam
5 Mirukasírádám	14 Chittirai	23 Avidám
6 Tiruvátirai	15 Suváti	24 Satayam
7 Punarpúsam	16 Visákam	25 Púraddáti
8 Púsam	17 Anúsham	26 Uttiradáti
9 A'yiliyam	18 Kéddai	27 Révati

Attam, Visákam, Tiruvónam, the *ilakkıṇams* Idapam, Karkkádakam, Chinkam, Viruchchikam, Kumpam, at the rising of Iráku and Kulíkan, the grain may be brought home.

8.—*Storing the Paddy in baskets, bins, &c.*—On four occasions in January, seven in February, and four in March—any day except Sunday and Tuesday,—generally at sunset or night.

9.—*Eating the new rice*.—On eleven occasions in January, six in February, and two in March,—generally at night.

10.—*Distributing the Grain*.—Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday; the asterisms, Achchuvini, Urókini, Mirukasírádám, Punarpúsam, Púsam, Makam, Púram, Uttiram, Attam, Chittirai, Suváti, Visákam, Anúsham, Uttirádám, Tiruvónam, Avidám, Uttiradáti Révati; the lunar days (*titi*) Tutiyai, Tirutiyai, Pañchami, Saptami, Tasami, E'kátasi, Tuvátasi, Tirayótasi; the *ilakkıṇams* Idapam, Mituṇam, Chinkam, Kannī, Viruchchikam, Taṇusu, Kumpam, Míṇam; the eighth house being vacant, are the best times for distributing for household purposes the grain stored up in baskets, &c., and for giving and receiving grain. On the above-mentioned lunar days, week days, and asterisms, in

Sighalese *lagnaya*. The *laknams* are synonymous with the twelve *rási*. (See C. A. S. Journal, 1883, p. 66 note.)

“On Wednesday one-third,” omitted from the Almanac.

Iráku (Sighalese, Ráhu, Graha), *Caput Draconis*, the ascending node which, with *Kétu*, *Cauda Draconis*, the descending node, is feigned to cause eclipses by endeavouring to swallow the sun and moon.

Kulikan, “one of these seven invisible planets said to be the son of Saturn—of special importance in astrological calculations.” If it is invisible, it does not seem clear how the agriculturist is to know when it is rising.

Although we have thirty lunar days, yet we have names for sixteen *tithis* only, because the month being divided into two fortnights, fourteen of the names are common to both fortnights. (*Ind. Ant.*, loc. sit.) It seems that the Sighalese have names for fifteen only. (C. A. S. Journal, 1883, p. 64.) The Tamil names are:—

1 Piratamai	7 Saptami	13 Tirayótasi
2 Tutiyai	8 Ashdami	14 Saturttasi
3 Tirutiyai	9 Navami	15 Pourṇimai
4 Saturtti	10 Tasami	16 Amávásiyai
5 Pañchami	11 E'kátasi	
6 Sashdi	12 Tuvátasi	

the *karaṇam** *Viddi*, and the *ilakkinam* *Mēḍam*, *Karkkadakam*, *Tulām*, and *Makaram*, are the best times for buying and selling paddy.

Lucky hours are also given for commencing the following agricultural operations, which form a large part of the occupation of a Jaffna peasant :—

- (1) Digging wells or tanks, and making embankments—every month in the year, except September, December, and February.
- (2) Planting young plantain trees—every month.
- (3) Do. young arekanut trees—September to March.
- (4) Do. cocoanuts—every month.
- (5) Do. creepers, &c.—no month specified.
- (6) Do. betel—April, May, September, June.
- (7) Sowing and transplanting brinjals, chillies, &c.—every month.
- (8) Planting yams—no particular month.
- (9) Tethering cattle and making pinfolds in tobacco gardens—August, November.
- (10) Diggir^g tobacco gardens—October to December.
- (11) Sowing and transplanting tobacco—August to March.
- (12) Cutting tobacco plants, putting *kudil*s, and drying tobacco leaves in the sun—March to June.
- (13) Buying and selling tobacco—March to July.

* Karaṇas are eleven in number, and divided into variable and invariable. They answer successively to half a tithi or lunar-day, *Kimstughna* being always assigned to the first half of the first tithi, and the variable Karaṇas, succeeding each other regularly through eight repetitions. They are followed by the three remaining invariable Karaṇas which conclude the month; *Ehatuspad* and *Nāga* appertaining to *Amāvāsyā*, or the new moon, and *Sakuni* being appropriated to the latter half of the preceding tithi." (Colebrooke, quoted in *Ind. Ant., loc. lit.*)

The Tamil names of the Karaṇams are :—

1 Pavam	... i.e., Lion	7 Viddi	... i.e., Cock
2 Pálavam	... " Tiger	8 Sakunam	... " Owl
3 Kaulavam	... " Pig	9 Saturppátam	... " Dog
4 Taitilam	... " Ass	10 Nákavam	... " Snake
5 Karasam	... " Elephant	11 Kimastukkinam	... " Worm
6 Vanisam	... " Ox		

- (14) Tying tobacco leaves into bundles—March to June, August to October.
- (15) Planting trees, &c.,—no particular month specified.
- (16) Buying and selling cattle, &c.
- (17) Branding and castrating cattle.

(2).—CEYLON PLOUGHS.

As it may be interesting to compare the varieties of ploughs used by the natives of Ceylon in different parts of the country, I annex some sketches of Kandyan and Low-country (Sinhalese) ploughs. It will be noticed that they are none of them of the same pattern as the Jaffna plough. (Plate No. 1.)

The principal plough used by the Kandyans is shown in Plate No. 2. It is called the *badavata nagula*. The handle (F) is generally a rude representation of a bird—hence its name *nimunkurullá*. It is usually made of buffalo horn.

The other Kandyan plough is the *koku nagula* (Plate No. 3), which is used for muddy land. It does not run so smoothly as the *badavata nagula*, and is liable to stick in the ground. Turned over sideways, it is sometimes used as a mud-leveller, the cultivator standing on the flat part and holding on by a stick tied to the handle.

The ploughs used by the Sinhalese of the Western Province are something like the *koku nagula* in shape, but generally smaller and lighter. There are two patterns in use in the Western Province (Plates Nos. 4 and 5), known as the *tani-hédé nagula* ("single-shaped plough"), and the *hédá-deké nagula* ("plough of two shapes"). The only difference between them is in the shape of the front of the *vakatta*, and consequently of the iron coulter or share with which it is faced. In the *hédá-deké nagula* this, instead of being straight projects half-way down in a curve, to prevent its sinking too deep in the soil. It is, I suppose, on account of this division as it were of the share into two parts, that the plough is known by the curious name "the plough of two shapes." This plough is used more especially for *ówiṭa* land, and in *hékulan* cultivation.

In the low-country plough the *koravakkoṭé* is now generally dispensed with, and the shaft rests on the *vakatta*, which is faced

with iron—the iron projects for an inch or two at the foot to form a share, which is often shaped like a cobra's hood. In the Jaffna and Kandyan ploughs the upper end of the share is inserted between the *vakatta* and the *koravak-hoté*.

In the Jaffna plough the shaft is rounded—a veritable pole. This is not the case in the Sinhalese ploughs. In the latter there is a notch* for the tying of the rope at the end; in the former this purpose is answered by a horizontal peg passing through the pole. The Sinhalese shafts are usually made of *kitul* wood.

The low-country yokes are the same shape as the Jaffna yoke, but instead of pegs at each end, only the one in the centre is used.

The Kandyan yoke is heavier and more elaborate; notches supply the place of the centre peg. In both Kandyan and low-country Sinhalese yokes, the ropes attaching the oxen to them pass through holes at the extremities.

(3).—CHARMS.

I.—Against Rats.

ஓம் எவியன்பிள்ளை புவியன்வாரூர் பூஜியனர் காவல் எலி எல்லாம் கட்டி அப்புறம்போகவே சிவாகா.†

ஓம் எவியன்பிள்ளை ஆஜையானர் காவல் எவிநெற்புலம் விட டு புறப்புலம்போகவே சிவாகா.

ஓம் எவியன்பிள்ளை புவியன்வாரூர் பூஜியனர்காவல் எலிடு ப்புலம்விடடு புறப்புலம்போகவே சிவாகா.

ஓம் இந்திரபுரத்தில் எவிட்புவிவாரூர் எவிஇட்புலம்விடடு அப்புலம்போகவே சிவாகா.

1. *O'm! † Mr. § Rat! Mr. Tiger is coming, Mr. Cat is watching. May all the rats go away together to another quarter.|| Let it be so! ¶*

* Often two, to provide for the employment of different-sized oxen. The length of the shaft in all the ploughs is from eight to ten feet.

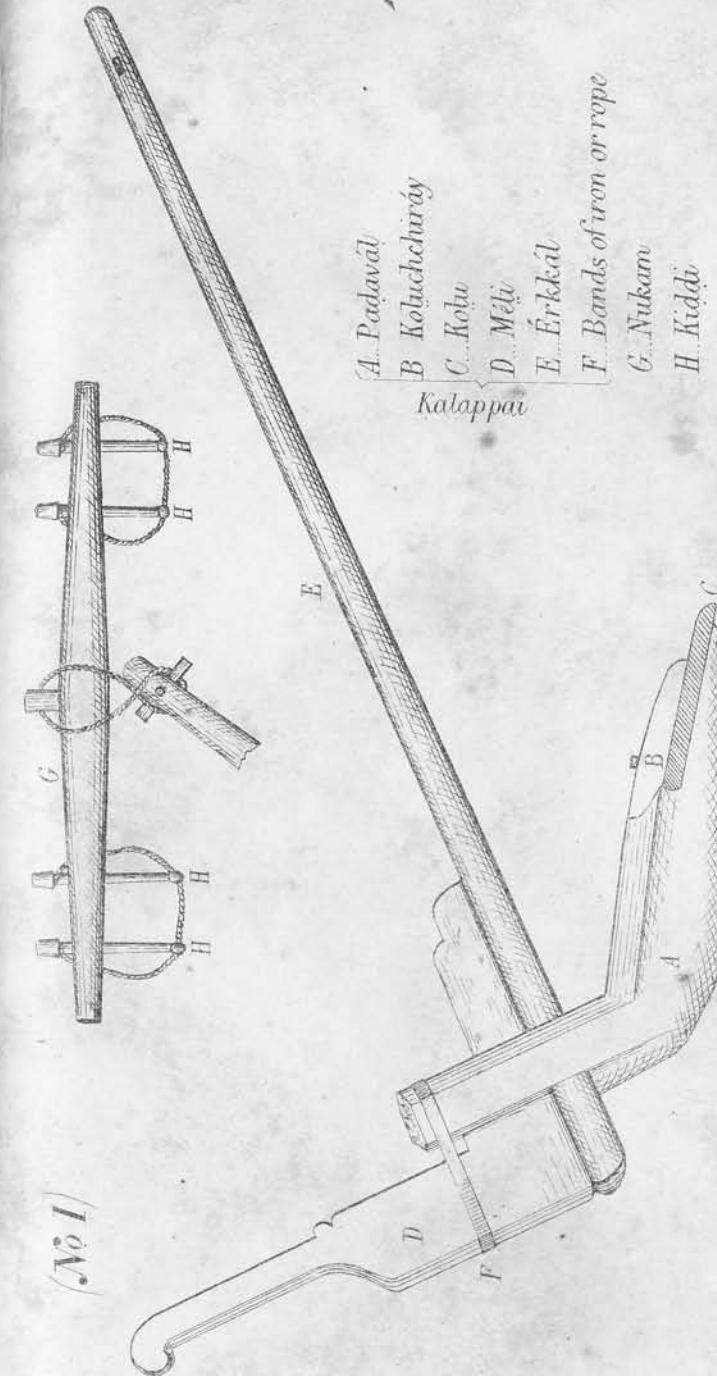
† Properly சுவாகா, an exclamation of mystic import, used in making an oblation to the gods.

‡ The mystic invocation to the Hindu Triad.

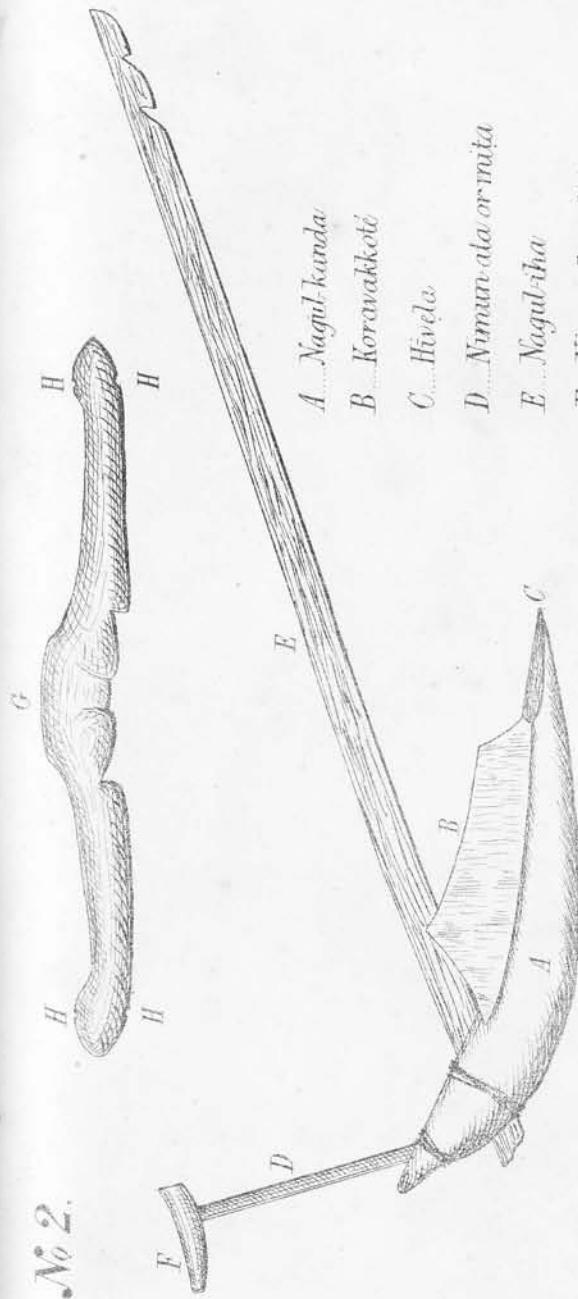
§ These honorifics are hardly translatable.

|| Literally, "to that side," or perhaps புலம் should be translated throughout by "field."

¶ See C. A. S. Journal, 1883, page 76, note.

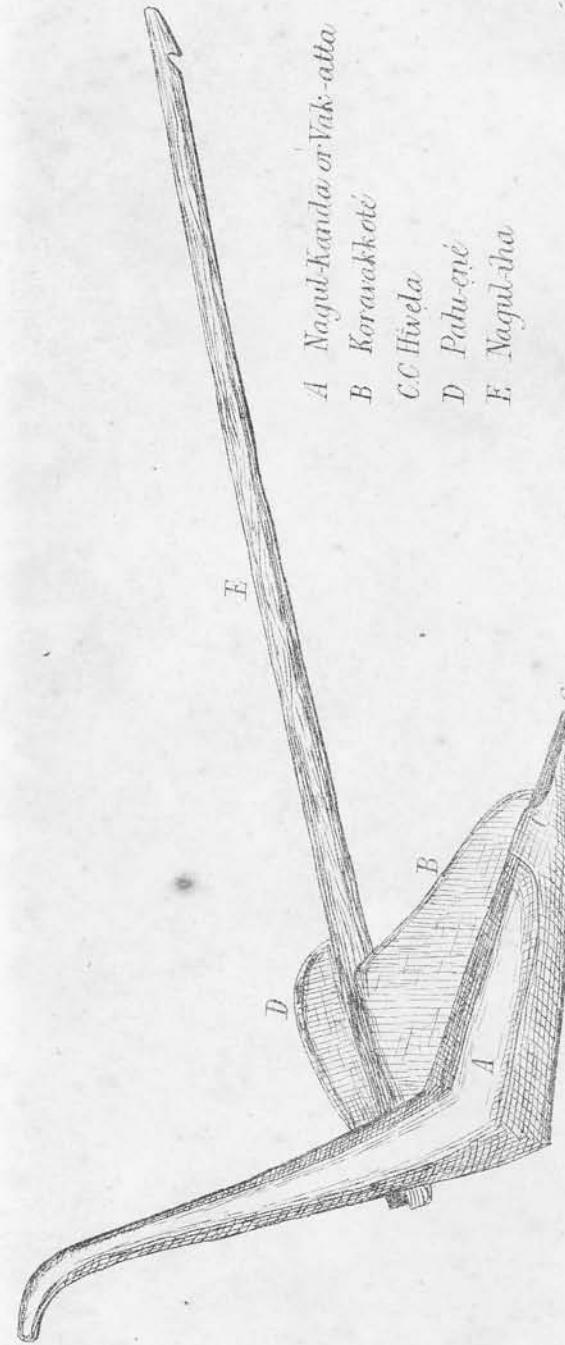


No 2.



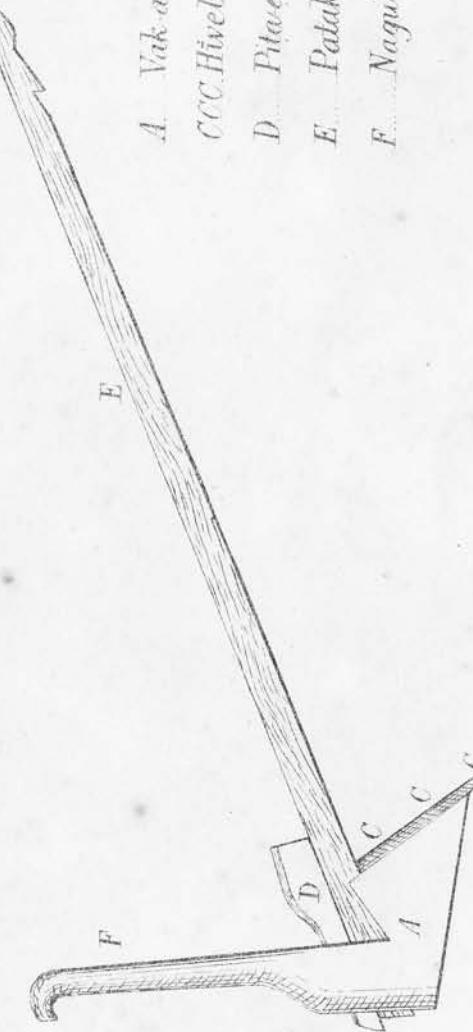
Badawata Nagula (Kandyan)

to pass through to attach the exec



Kokin Nagula (Kandyian)

No 4.



A. *Vik atta*

CC. Hivela

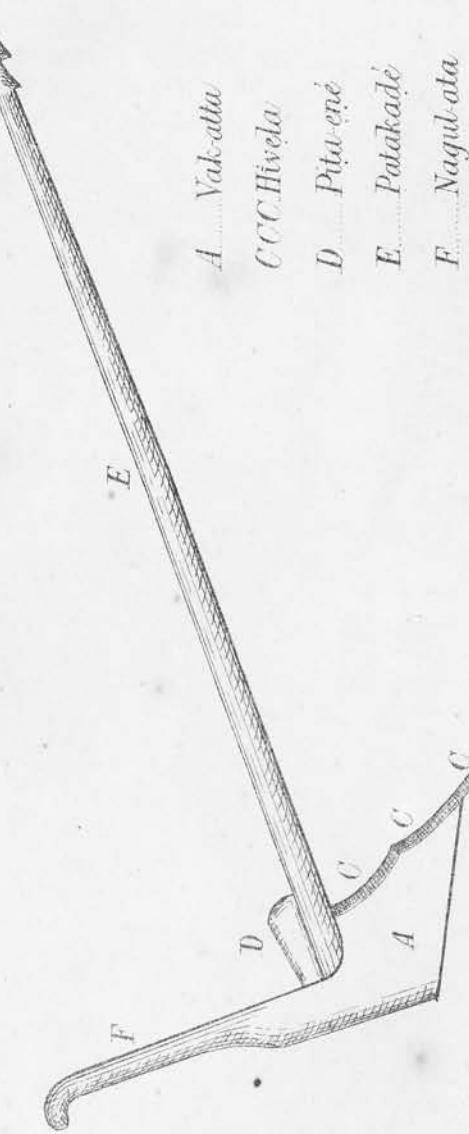
B. *Pitareé or Patwene*

C. *Patakade*

D. *Nagul atta or Nimmattu*

Tan Hede Nagila (Western Province)

(Nº 5)



Hēda-dekēNāgula (Western Province)

2. *O'm!* Mr. Rat! Mr. Elephant is watching. May the rats quit the paddy field, and go to another quarter. Let it be so!

3. *O'm!* Mr. Rat! Mr. Tiger is coming, Mr. Cat is watching. May the rats leave this and go somewhere else. Let it be so!

4. *O'm!* Mr. Rat-tiger is coming from the city of Indra. May the rats leave this and go somewhere else. Let it be so!

II.—Against Worms.

ஓம்! விலும்லோகம் விட்டுனுவோகம் நக்லோகம் சந்திரலோகம் தேவலோகத்துக்குட்பட்ட புழக்கள் [புழுபுழு] எல்லாத்துக்கும் தம்பிரானிடத்தே சென்று தம்பிரானருளிக்கொட்டபடியால் கள் விவரித்துக்கொட்டு கன்னிவெட்டிச் சுட்டுப்போடச் சொன்னபடியால் நானும் வாயிலேநருப்பும் அக்குமாலையுமாய் நின்றேன் குத்தப்புழு மாஷ்சுக்கட்டி கொப்புப் புழு குளைச்சுக்கண் கூழைவாலன் குறுங்கழுத்தன் வில்லான்றி வேர்க்கறையான் கந்தப்புழு தக்துவெட்டியன் எப்பெயர்ப்பட்ட புழுக்கெளல்லாம் இப்புனம் விட்டு அப்புனம் போகவே சிவாகா.

O'm! I went before the Supreme, and as he graciously permitted me to go to the milk-hedge* forest, and cut milk-hedge and burn all the worms that are in Brahma world, Vishnu world, Naga world, Moon world, and the world of the Gods. I myself stood with fire in my mouth and wearing a necklace of sacred beads. Let these, viz., stinging worms, worms which fold, branch worms, branch-eating worms, bob-tailed worms, short-necked worms, worms which bend like a bow, white ants, jointed worms, grasshoppers, and all worms of any name whatever, quit this field and go to another field. Let it be so!

(4).—REPORT BY THE CHIEF MUTALIYÁR AND IRRIGATION MUTALIYÁR ON THE CUSTOMS, &c., AS REGARDS PADDY CULTIVATION IN BATTICALOA.†

THERE are three kinds of harvest in the paddy cultivation of this District, viz. :—

1. The Muṇmári;
2. The Kálavelláṇmai; and
3. The Ettálai.

* *Euphorbia Tirucalli.* Sigh., *Nava-handi*.

† Administration Report, Government Agent, Eastern Province, 1870, pp. 171-3.

1st.—In the "Muṇmári" there are two different modes of cultivation,—one under the ploughing system, commenced about September, and the other under the trampling system, commenced about January in the following year; but the age of the paddy sown in the former being longer than that used in the latter, the harvest of both takes place simultaneously in April.

2ndly.—The second, or the "Kálavelláñmai" cultivation, which is termed "Piñmári" in Trincomalee, is entirely under the trampling system, and is commenced in March, and sometimes in April; its harvest takes place in August.

3rdly.—The third, or the "Ettálai" cultivation, which is also carried on under the trampling system, is commenced in August, and its harvest comes on about the end of September or the beginning of October.

In the cultivation of a field, a portion of the land is set apart for the "Pódi," or proprietor, which is called "Muṭṭadḍu," and another to the "Muṇnilaikkáraṇ," or the head field-servant, called the "Muṇnilai vayal"; and the rest is divided between the cultivators, or "Veliyáns," which divisions are called "Veliyán vayal." As a general rule, about a fifth of the field is taken as "Muṭṭadḍu," but if the field be more than twenty avanams' sowing extent, about a fourth is cultivated as "Muṭṭadḍu," and in consideration of the responsibility and supervision of the whole field by the "Muṇnilaikkáraṇ," who is the sole manager of the cultivation, the "Muṇnilai vayal" either equals, or is a little larger than, the "Muṭṭadḍu"; and the remainder is divided equally, according to the extent cultivatable by each man, having respect to the facilities for cultivation, the quality of the soil, and the means of irrigation, as well as the expenses of fencing and watching. Care is however taken that each man's share shall not be less than two avanams' extent, nor exceed three avanams' extent at most. There are, however, exceptional cases founded on either the fertility or the sterility of the soil, where the Muṇnilaikkáraṇ has an extra portion, called "Ilavisam" to cultivate.

For instance, in a field of $20\frac{1}{2}$ avanams' extent the divisions and number of cultivators are determined as follows:—

Muṭṭadḍu	4	avanams
Muṇnilai vayal	4	"
Ilavisam.....	$0\frac{1}{2}$	"
Six Veliyán vayals, at 2 avanams each	12	"

making the whole to be eight "vayals" including the "Muṭṭadḍu" and "Muṇnilai vayals," and with these six "Veliyáns" or cultivators (and two other coolies for "Muṭṭadḍu" and "Muṇnilai vayals") the whole field is cultivated. For the sowing are required $20\frac{1}{2}$ avanams' seed and 16 avanams' maintenance paddy at 2 avanams each—equals 36 avanams in all; which is liable to a charge of 50 per cent. profit, payable out of the crop. The Moors (except those of Erávúr and Akkaraippattu) do not charge 50 per cent., because prohibited by their religion, but exact a portion of the cultivator's share, which amounts to double the quantity of the maintenance paddy.

When no agreement is made for the cultivation of "Muṭṭadḍu" for the "Pódi," but advances of seed and maintenance paddy are made, 50 per cent. is charged on both the seed and maintenance paddy; and the "Pódi" is entitled to a proportionate share of the produce, as he would be of the sowing extent of the land.

The "Pódi" is entitled to the free labour of all the field-servants in the cultivation of the "Muṭṭadḍu," that is, if the cultivators agree to sow a "Muṭṭadḍu" for the "Pódi" to the produce whereof he has exclusive right, but he has to pay a cooly who looks after the "Muṭṭadḍu"; and the "Muṇnilaikkáraṇ," or the manager and superintendent of the cultivation, is also entitled to a certain degree of free labour which is performed for him in the cultivation of the "Muṇnilai vayal," and which free labour is rendered to him partly because of the attention and general superintendence of the cultivation of the field, and partly from fear of the "Muṇnilaikkáraṇ," who will make them forfeit the perquisites of the cultivation (which will be seen in the sequel) if they refuse to render him free labour to a certain extent. The amount of this free labour is as follows:—

The field-servant must put up the ridges of the "Muṇnilai vayal," sow it and fence it, along with the cooly of the "Muṇnilai vayal"; the fence-sticks are to be supplied by the field-servants; no fence, by custom of the country, is apportioned for the "Muṭṭadḍu" and "Muṇnilai vayal," which is divided in common with the fences of the field-servants; cattle for trampling are to be supplied by the "Pódi" or the "Muṇnilaikkáraṇ," unless each field-servant has his own cattle. The usual hire of a yoke of *buffaloes* for trampling is one avanam of paddy, and a shilling and sixpence in money, called "Kaikkúli," if paid in advance; and one and a-half avanam of paddy, if paid after the harvest.

The hire for ploughing bullocks is one avanam if paid in advance, and one and one third avanams, or forty marakkals of paddy at the harvest.

Before commencing cultivation, astrologers are consulted to find out an "E'rná], or an auspicious day, to commence cultivation; and that being fixed upon (which is generally at nights), the cultivators go and wait at the field till the Pleiades rise or come to the meridian, and then the cultivators plough or trample the land, sow a few seeds, and have a small feast in the open field. After cultivation, the plain is fenced by the joint labours of all the cultivators, and watched at nights until the crop is reaped and stacked.

If the land is not commuted, the tythe goes to the Government renter, but if commuted, the whole produce of the "Muṭṭadḍu" (after paying two avanams to the "Muṭṭadḍu" cooly) goes to the "Pódi." Tythe and seed-paddy, with 50 per cent. profit, are only taken from the produce of "Muṇṇilai vayal," and those of the "Veliyáns" are subject to various charges, as in the following instance, viz.:—Suppose the produce of one cultivator's share, three avanams in extent, yields twenty avanams of paddy, he will have to pay

2	avanams	0	marakkál..	Tythe.
3	"	0	"	Seed-paddy.
1	"	15	"	Interest on it.
2	"	0	"	Maintenance paddy.
1	"	0	"	Interest on it.
0	"	15	"	Removal of above.
10	"	0	"	
—	—	—	—	

2	avanams	2	marakkál..	Cattle-hire.
1	"	10	"	Hire of reaping his share.
0	"	12	"	Do. Muṭṭadḍu.
0	"	15	"	Do. bird-driver.
0	"	9	"	Do. Vaddai Vitánsai, or Superintendent.
0	"	9	"	Do. removal of Muṭṭadḍu.
0	"	2	"	Do. hunter for driving wild pigs, &c.
0	"	4	"	Do. charmer of flies, &c.
0	"	2	"	For temple or mosque, and for the poor.
0	"	5	"	Arakku and charm for devils.
16	"	10	"	
—	—	—	—	

which leaves a balance of 3 avanams 20 marakkals to the cultivator.

For threshing, Thursdays are considered the best days to commence, and certain charms and ceremonies are performed to keep off "Pútams," or devils, from carrying away the fruits of their labour. The charm is called "Arakku," which consists of the following stuffs shut up in a box, viz., silver, copper, iron, coral, pearl, chank, valampuri (a fruit), chadaimudi (a vegetable), and some arrack in a vial, and buried in the centre of the threshing-floor with margosa leaves, &c., over which the sheaves are heaped and the cattle turned on them for threshing. In addition to these charms and ceremonies, to keep off the devil from stealing the paddy they begin to use a peculiar slang to keep the devils ignorant of what is spoken. For instance, the threshing cattle, instead of being termed "Mádu" as usual, go by the name "Várikkálán," the meaning of which is "productive-legged"; the "Marakkál," or the measure, is termed "kapakkaṇ," meaning "accountant"; the baskets are called "Peruváyan," or "broad-mouthed," and every implement has a different name in the threshing-floor. All expressions that have meanings suggestive of decrease or other ill-omened significations are avoided, and the word "multiply" is always substituted. For instance, the expression:—

Drive the bullocks.....	is rendered	Multiply the "Várikkálán."
Sweep the corn	"	Multiply the "Poli."
Bring the "Marakkál" ...	"	Multiply the "Kaṇakkan."
Fill the basket	"	Multiply the "Peruváyan."
Bring some water.....	"	Multiply some "Vellam."
Go home for rice.....	"	Multiply home for "Vellai."
Call him to take this and deliver it at home.....	"	Multiply him to multiply this and to multiply at home.
	&c.,	&c.,

In threshing, cattle are driven with a song, the purport of which is to invoke the deities to give them a good produce.

The perquisites of the field-servants are the following:—At the reaping of the "Vayals," each field-servant is entitled to eight bundles of the best crop of his "vayal," by way of "Putir"; and further, four bundles of corn, called "Kuruvimúlai" (bird nook). "Paiyali" (the "pallam" of the water-course in the "vayal"), two "Marakkáls" extent of the "vayal," is sown for the field-servant, to the produce whereof he is solely entitled. Besides, he gets "Adiechchúdu" (bottom of the stack that is wet), being sometimes three bundles, "Maṇṇápakkadḍi" (bits of earth), the

off-scouring of the threshing-floor, "Patarkadai" (chaff), and "Kaṇḍumāri" (paddy between chaff and first-class paddy).

The coolies of the "Muṭṭadḍu" and "Muṇṇilai vayal" are entitled to similar perquisites from the "Muṭṭadḍu" and "Muṇṇilai vayal," respectively. On the day of reaping, the "Pōdi" attends the field to take an account of the crop, when the cooly of the "Muṭṭadḍu" puts up a shed for him covered with sheaves from the "Muṭṭadḍu," and when the shed is left unoccupied, the "Muṭṭadḍu" cooly becomes entitled to the sheaves with which he thatched the shed.

On the day of commencing the cultivation of the "Muṭṭadḍu" and "Muṇṇilai vayal," a feast is given by the "Pōdi" and the "Muṇṇilaikkāru," called the "Pōdi Viruntu" and "Muṇṇilai-viruntu," respectively. But this has died out now. "Tiṇḍa Chilavu" (a slight native lunch), called fine feast, is exacted from the "Pōdi" in the following way :—

If the "Pōdi," or sometimes a representative from the "Pōdi's" family, happens to be present at the field on the day that the sheaves are made up and stacked, one of the field-servants slyly approaches the "Pōdi" with a sheaf on the top of his head, and all at a sudden falls down with the sheaf and pretends to make a great noise, as if in agonising pain, when all the people in the field flock up to him, one after the other, and being interrogated "What ails you ?" the pretender replies, "I suffer from pains in the loins, oppression in the chest, and colic ;" and being asked to recommend the remedy, the pretender prescribes the remedy, and says that nothing less than it will effect a cure. A Mocrman asks for cakes and fruits, but a Tamil man asks for cakes, fruits, and a bottle of arrack. "Unless these be brought and tied on my back, a cure will not be effected." When the "Pōdi" promises to procure the remedy, the man gets up, and not till then. This should be given first of all on the day that the threshing of the "Muṭṭadḍu" takes place, and cakes are to be prepared at the "Pōdi's" house by the wives of the field-servants, who must provide firewood, water, &c. If the remedy that the pretender wants be refused, or no notice is taken of it by the "Pōdi," all sorts of indignities or provocations are showered upon the "Pōdi" by the field-servants, who make an effigy of straw, called "Hampai," to represent the "Pōdi," which is stuck upon the Muttaddu stack of the crop, and then representations are made of the "Pōdi"

himself eating all the cakes named, by fixing to the mouth of the effigy mud or clay cakes made by the field-servants. Sometimes an ola and a stick are put into the hands of the effigy, to represent the "Pōdi" taking an account of the crop reaped. The denial on the part of the "Pōdi" is followed by a virtual denial of obedience to the orders of the "Pōdi," under the pretence of being sick from the surfeit of the repast given by the "Pōdi," which is ironical language.

If the "Pōdi" does not give the demanded repast, he, to maintain his respect with the field-servants, must by all means give five marakkals of paddy to each field-servant ; otherwise his stinginess will be thrown in his face in public, and kept up.

After the paddy is removed from the threshing-floor to the Pōdi's house, the field-servants must fetch straw from the threshing-floor, thatch the house of the Pōdi, and repair the fence of the garden, and then they get their discharge.

E. SOMANADA MUTALIYĀR,
Chief Mutaliyār.

A. D. ZYLVĀ,
Irrigation Mutaliyār.

Batticaloa, 24th February, 1871.